

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as currently amended and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-44 are currently pending in the application. Claims 27, 28, 34 – 37, 43, and 44 have been amended by the current amendment. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 27 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 11-10949 to Kanai; claims 28 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanai in view of US Patent No. 6,154,246 to Ogasawara et al.; and claims 29-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanai in view of Ogasawara et al. and further in view of US Patent No. 6,498,617 to Ishida et al.; claims 36 and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanai in view of US Patent No. 4,694,156 to Swanberg; claims 37 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanai in view of Swanberg further in view of Ogasawara et al.; claims 38-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanai in view of Swanberg and Ogasawara et al. and further in view of Ishida et al.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter regarding Claims 1 – 26.

Independent Claims 27, 34, 36, and 43 have been amended to include features consistent to the features highlighted in the Office Action for rendering Claims 1 – 26 allowable.

Consequently, Kanai is not believed to anticipate or render obvious the subject matter defined by Claims 27-44 when considered alone or in combination with the applied secondary art.

Application No. 09/873,256
Reply to Office Action of October 17, 2005

No further issues are believed to be outstanding, and the application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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